

# HABAKKUK

## LESSON # 3

### 1:1-4

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As we proceed through Habakkuk we will quickly discover something about prophecy: These books are written as whole units, and their parts do not necessarily stand alone. We cannot break a prophecy up into small chunks and expect to understand it on its own; some of our questions will remain unanswered right up until the end of the book. So our approach to these first verses has to be different: Rather than expecting to get clarity and find answers right away, in this lesson our goal will be to simply identify the prophet's questions, understand his dilemmas and explore his mindset.

Read through the entire book of Habakkuk before beginning this lesson, and ask the Lord to give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him (Ephesians 1:17). ◻

1. In Habakkuk 1:1, we see that Habakkuk is “the prophet.” What was a prophet? What was his purpose? How should his words be taken? See what the following Scriptures tell us about the prophet.

Jeremiah 1:4-10

2 Kings 17:12-14

Hebrews 1:1

2. Habakkuk 1:1 opens by announcing that this is the oracle which he, the prophet, saw. The word “oracle” has also been translated “burden”. Why would this message be such a burden for the prophet to bear? What tone does this first sentence set, and what does it alert the listener to expect?

3. Habakkuk 1:2-4 contain the prophet's first question, or complaint. What is the essence of his problem as he presents it to the Lord?
  
4. What was going on in Judah? In your own words, restate the prophet's description of his people from vss. 2-4.
  
5. In Lesson #2 we explored a number of passages in 2 Kings 21-23 which helped to lay out the historical context of this prophecy. Briefly summarize the events which led to the prophet's anguished observations.
  
6. One of Habakkuk's complaints (vs. 4) is that "the law is ignored"—literally "numbed, paralyzed." What do you learn about this law from the following Scriptures, and why would it be so distressing to see it ignored?

Deuteronomy 4:5-8

Deuteronomy 6:1-3

Psalm 19:7-11

7. Righteous people in every generation and nation have anguished over the evil that surrounds them, but Habakkuk has even more reason to be distressed. Who were his people? See Exodus 19:5-6.
  
8. Habakkuk understood that unfaithfulness on the part of God's covenant people would bring very specific consequences upon them. Deuteronomy 28 is one of several passages which list the blessings that would come upon the nation for their obedience, as well as the curses that they could expect for their disobedience.
  - a. What were some of the promised blessings found in Deuteronomy 28:1-14?
  
  - b. What curses were promised for disobedience in 28:15-48?
  
  - c. And, finally, if all else failed and they continued to disobey, what would happen according to Deuteronomy 28:49-68?
  
9. What picture do we get of Habakkuk's prayer life from 1:2? What was he seeking, how had he expected God to respond, and what was his present disposition?

10. Through the ages, godly men have questioned God in this manner. Look up the following passages and for each one, note who was questioning God, and what circumstances prompted their complaint.

a. Psalm 13:1-2

b. Psalm 74:1-2, 10-11

c. Jeremiah 14:8-9

d. Matthew 27:46

11. Have you ever had a “How long, O Lord” moment, when you just didn’t think you could endure your circumstances any longer? Have you ever seethed with indignation at the injustices around you? Have you ever wondered how God could tolerate so much evil, and remain silent in response to your cries? If you were to write your own “How Long, O Lord?” prayer, what would you say?

12. Habakkuk was clearly in anguish over the evil he saw all around him in Judah, but who else was watching? See Job 28:24; Hebrews 4:13; 2 Chron. 16:9.

13. Why do we need to remember this when we are struggling with the evil in the world?
14. In his opening monologue, Habakkuk was facing the common problem of seemingly **unanswered prayers**. From Habakkuk's perspective, what was God doing (1:2-4)?
15. In 1:2-4 Habakkuk essentially accused God of being idle while evil prevailed among His people. In contrast to Habakkuk's assessment, what was God actively doing all along (see v. 5-6)?
16. Why would it be important to remember this when we are facing the "How long. O Lord" questions in our own lives? What other truths from God's revealed Word could we turn to when we are facing similar questions?
17. What principles can we learn from this about how God answers prayers?

18. One of the reasons the book of Habakkuk is so relevant to us today is because his opening monologue expresses problems we have all faced at one time or another: a) persistent unanswered prayers, and b) the seeming indifference of God to gross evil and injustice on earth. How has Habakkuk already begun to speak to these problems in your life?

*I am watching over My word to perform it.”  
~El Roi, The God Who Sees  
Jeremiah 1:12*